



Using film, video and images to engage low achievers.

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Northcote College
IFTE Conference 2011

A BRIEF OUTLINE

- This workshop aims to show some successful tactics, techniques and tools for engaging some of our most difficult students.
- It's not a miracle cure!
- It's based on my experiences teaching English and Media Studies at Northcote College, and particularly from our Foundation English courses

FOUNDATION ENGLISH

- “Foundation English” is the name we give to the courses that are aimed at students who have been identified as struggling or seriously under-performing in the junior years. This can be for a variety of reasons:
 - disabilities and/or disorders (often Asperger’s)
 - lack of engagement
 - low cognitive levels
 - resistance to the subject, often from bad experiences in the past (it can be a self-fulfilling prophesy)
 - English as a second (or third...or fourth...) language
 - A million other things
- This means that there’s a great deal of differentiation that needs to happen, and so we design courses around providing not just more time/fewer assessments, but providing opportunities for success.

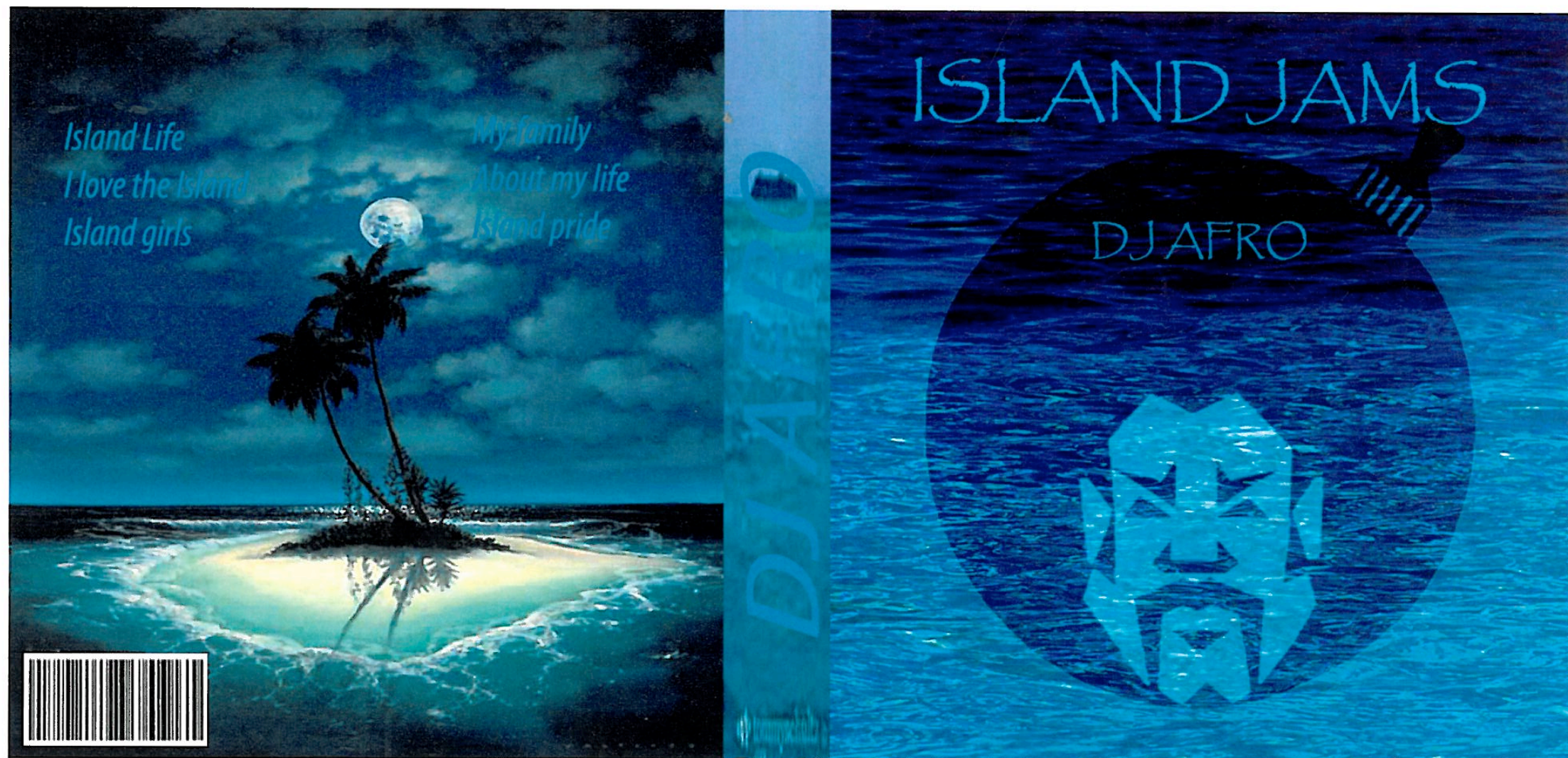
THE FOUNDATION STUDENT

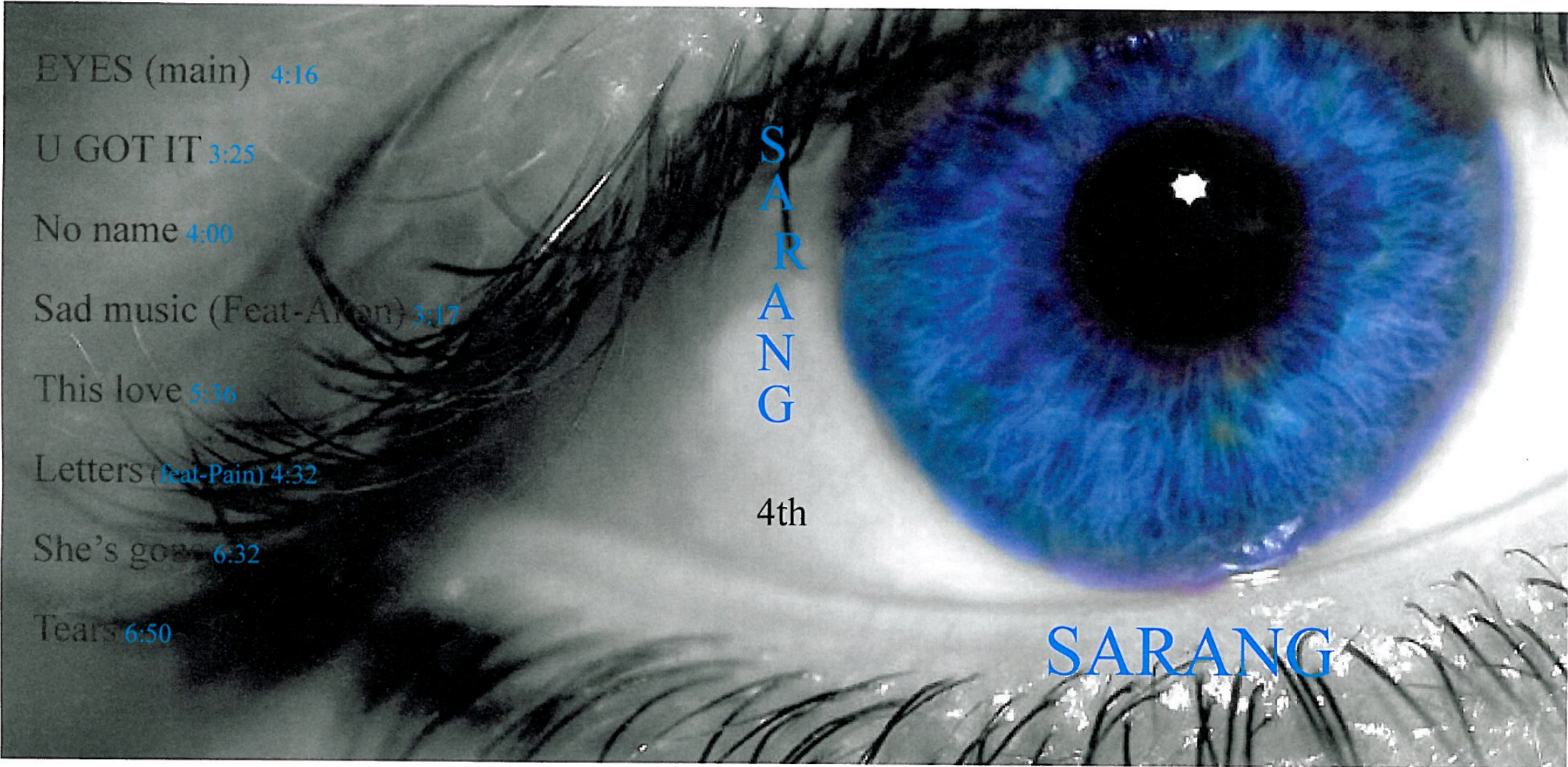
- Sometimes, gross generalisation is helpful. The students we identify:
 - are largely male (but definitely not exclusively)
 - often have dyslexia/dyspraxia
 - have serious confidence issues
 - have behavioural and/or learning difficulties
 - are often extremely fussy and resistant to pretty much everything
 - have very strong visual literacy skills
 - are often pains in the arse

THE FOUNDATION WORK

- We have to always keep this knowledge in our minds:

These students can, and do, produce very high quality work.





EYES (main) 4:16

U GOT IT 3:25

No name 4:00

Sad music (Feat-Alton) 3:17

This love 5:36

Letters (feat-Pain) 4:32

She's gone 6:32

Tears 6:50

S
A
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G

4th

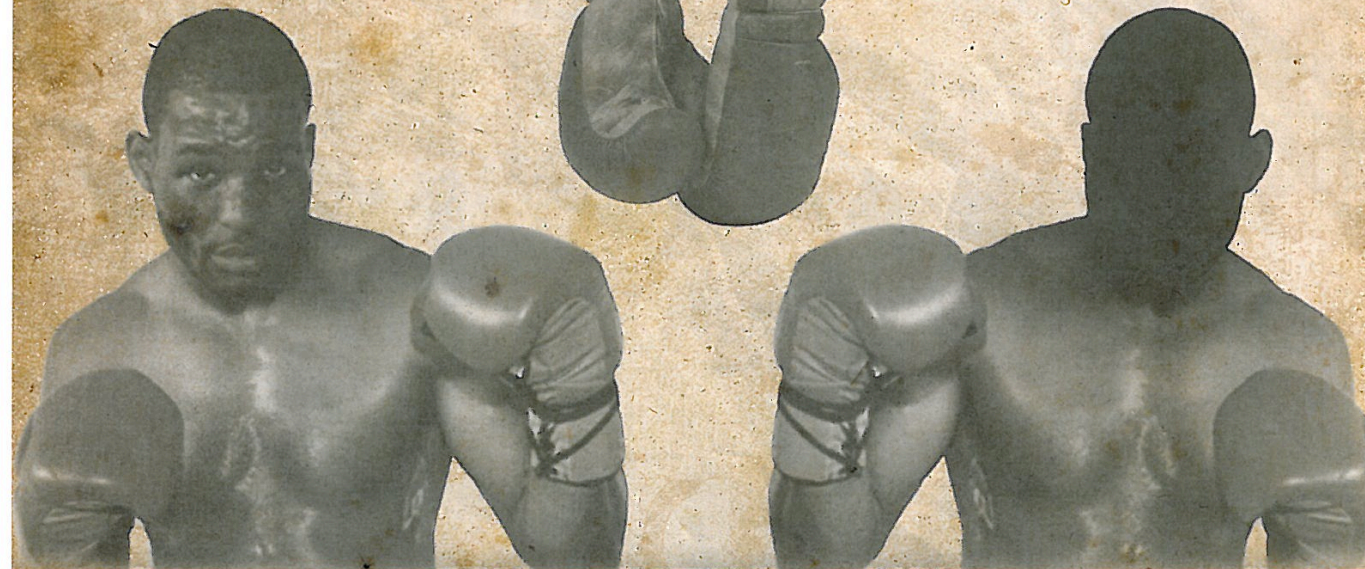
SARANG

SARANG

WORLD
HEAVYWEIGHT
CHAMPIONSHIP

VS.

AUCKLAND
UNDERDOG
FIGHTER



WORLD
HEAVYWEIGHT
CHAMPIONSHIP

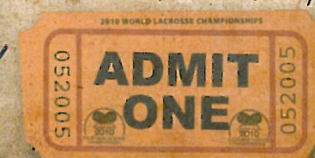
THE FIGHT
73 | OF THE
CENTURY

Vector  Arena

AUCKLAND'S VECTOR ARENA



24TH JULY



TICKETS \$12.00 AT THE DOOR

- 1)Jah love.
- 2)Herbs.
- 3)Rastaman.
- 4)Irie Beach Party.
- 5)Ruakinana.
- 6)Skankin.
- 7)keep rissing.
- 8)Jah bless.
- 9)Jah rastafari.
- 10)Redemption song.



Roots

Roots reggae

Reggae

Aotearoa



Aotearoa

Reggae



- 10)Redemption song.

WHAT SEEMS TO WORK:

- Static images
- Films
- Music
- Music videos
- Patience

MUSIC VIDEOS

- Music videos are brilliant teaching tools, because they are loaded with things to look at. As a condensed and sophisticated form of media, they often contain many textual and subtextual layers, which is good both for differentiation, and as a teaching tool.
- They also provide an excellent in-point to poetry and verbal language, particularly with popular (and intelligent) artists, such as Tupac Shakur, Mos Def and Saul Williams.
- You don't necessarily need to keep up with the Top 40 - if you have access to Youtube, it's not too hard to track down popular music videos. Television can also be a good medium, but it's increasingly common to have web-only music videos because it's cheaper.
- Another way (which can take a bit of time) is to get suggestions from the students themselves, and watch them to see which has the most potential for study.

HOW I APPROACH MUSIC VIDEOS

- One thing I have learned from teaching Media Studies is that the more you play a clip, the more your students will notice, and the more valuable the learning becomes. It can feel like it's taking an awful lot of time to get through such a short clip, but our philosophy is based around the idea that these students **need more time**.
- I usually:
 - talk through the task briefly
 - get students to read through the questions
 - play the video once, and get students to complete as many questions as they can **after it's finished**
 - play it again, reminding students to read the questions and know what they are looking for
 - play it several more times, usually with 5 - 10 minutes writing time in between

ACTIVITY

Getting Nowhere

Magnetic Man feat. John Legend

PRESENT/FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- a static image assessment based on producing a CD cover (part one of two)
- creating radio station advertisements
- song lyrics study (hopefully with links to poetry!)
- scripting/storyboarding activities for another music video

WHERE IT FITS

- Most of these things have been part of a thematic unit around urban black American culture, which is something the students seem to enjoy and [want to] identify with. We've looked at:
 - The film "Boys n the Hood" (starring Cuba Gooding Jr. and Laurence Fishburne)
 - The idea of urban, underprivileged youth and gang violence
 - Links to New Zealand youth and hip-hop cultures.
 - It has served as part of a formative teaching opportunity for a static image assessment.

BOYZ N THE HOOD



WHERE IT COULD FIT

- Next year I'd like to have a slightly different thematic focus on general youth culture, and comparisons between the positives and negatives.
- This could include a range of visual texts, and particularly advertising.
- It's also useful for getting students to make connections across different texts/text types. At NCEA Level One we have a specific standard for this, but for Level Two in 2012 it could lead to:
 - **English 2.7: Analyse significant connections across texts, with supporting evidence** (e.g. a seminar, poster/image, report...this standard has the advantage of allowing teachers to guide student selections quite significantly)
 - **English 2.8: Use information literacy skills to form developed conclusions** (e.g. a research project...ambition is important!)
 - **English 2.9: Form developed personal response to independently read texts, supported by evidence** (e.g. getting students to analyse and review some of the media and texts they consume)

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

- Many of these difficult students have quite sophisticated visual literacy.
- They can smell fear...but they can also sense enthusiasm.
- This probably won't make them admit to liking English, but you might notice that they keep showing up to your class.
- This could potentially bring you not only good results, but some excellent quality work (and increased confidence) from your students.

THANKS

- I can easily and readily be reached on:

hmaskell@northcote.school.nz

(but I am on holiday at the moment and will probably not check my emails for another week or so)

- I welcome any feedback, questions or suggestions.



MOTIVATION

That's a paddlin'.